



Ireland Wales Programme 2007 - 2013

COMMUNICATION PLAN

This Communications Plan has been drawn up in accordance with Chapter II, Section 1, Article 2 of the Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, for submission to the Commission within four months of the date of adoption of the Operational Programme (16th January 2008).

1 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To highlight the role of Community funding in facilitating cross border cooperation between Ireland and Wales and the real benefits that it brings to local communities.
- To promote the benefits and added value of co-operation to the general public in its widest sense by highlighting project results and outputs and their European dimension.
- To help generate new partnerships by increasing awareness amongst potential beneficiaries on the funding opportunities offered by the Ireland Wales Programme.
- To provide potential beneficiaries and stakeholders with accurate and reliable information to stimulate high quality applications.
- To design programme information in a transparent and easy to read fashion so that it can be easily understood by potential beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- To raise the profile of cross border co-operation within national and regional administrative systems.
- To encourage active dissemination of projects and programme results to professionals and political stakeholders.

2 TARGET GROUPS

There are four major target groups for the Ireland Wales Communication Plan: potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries, general public, politicians and key decision makers.



2.1 POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES

This target group encompasses all organisations and public authorities that could benefit from funding. Potential beneficiaries are principally professionals involved in the Programme's fields of action and can be broken down into three sub-categories:

- (a) Those who have no prior knowledge of the Ireland Wales Cross Border Territorial Co-Operation Programme or ERDF Structural Funds, and who are concerned with one of the priorities covered by the Operational Programme;
- (b) Those who have some knowledge of the Ireland Wales Cross Border Territorial Co-Operation Programme or ERDF Structural Funds but have not been involved so far;
- (c) Those who have already been involved in the Ireland Wales Cross Border Territorial Co-Operation Programme projects and who wish to get involved in the Operational Programme 2007 – 2013.

To reach potential beneficiaries, the Programme must inform widely differing stakeholder groups who are in a position to disseminate information about the programme's activities. These include state agencies, development agencies, trade associations, chambers of commerce, local authorities, county enterprise boards, universities and other academic institutions, and associated media outlets.

2.2 BENEFICIARIES

This target group includes all organisations and public authorities that have benefited from Interreg IIA or IIIA funding in the past, including those directly involved in project development and all partners in funded projects. It is important to stimulate their desire to continue publicising the positive outputs of their projects and to encourage them to share their knowledge of the benefits of cross border co-operation.

Beneficiaries will be responsible for informing the public about the financial assistance obtained from this programme by appropriate information means. Beneficiaries will also ensure that those taking part in an operation or project activity have been informed of the fact that it is part funded by the ERDF. Beneficiaries will provide clear notice to the effect that the operation or project being implemented has been selected under this Operational Programme and is co-financed by ERDF.

2.3 GENERAL PUBLIC

This target group are the inhabitants of the urban and rural areas that are directly concerned with projects funded by the EU and which benefit indirectly from cross border territorial co-operation and ERDF Structural Funds. The cross border impact of projects often goes well beyond its direct geographical area. This wide target group includes groups with specific interests of those which hold a particular voice within society such as local community groups, schools and associated media outlets.

2.4 POLITICIANS AND KEY DECISION MAKERS

The communication strategy will aim at increasing the level of interest and awareness of politicians and key decision makers at all levels, to get their political support and commitment (including that of European Agencies, who will be responsible for implementing future important investments). This may include organisations such as:

- Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Local Authorities in the Programme area
- Government Departments and State Agencies in Ireland and Wales
- Department of Finance, Ireland

Firstly, this will help project partners to secure adequate matched funding in an increasingly difficult context. Secondly, policy makers and heads of organisations have powerful communication channels at their disposal and can therefore act as important multipliers to inform beneficiaries and the wider public of the benefits and positive impacts that the Programme has on their everyday lives.

Programme communication will focus particularly on national and regional policy makers as well as MEPs who play a key role in defining Europe's regional policy.

3 STRATEGY AND CONTENT OF THE INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES

The Communication Plan is to support the overall objective of the Ireland Wales Operational Programme on cross border territorial development (2007-2013):

Through an integrated approach to economic, environmental, social and technological issues the Ireland Wales Territorial Cooperation Programme seeks to further develop the cross border region and:

- Contribute to its greater competitiveness and sustainable development;
- Improve its overall economic, environmental and social well-being;
- Achieve a more cohesive, balanced and sustainable development of the Ireland Wales cooperation area, and thus to contribute to the overall competitiveness of the Community territory in a globalised world.

Communication must happen both at Programme level (the Programme speaks about its results and achievements) and at Project level (the results of the Programme are the Project results and achievements in light of EU objectives).

Project results need to be collected and given as many opportunities for expression as possible, to build Programme communication around the themes which are defined in the Operational Programme, to achieve EU objectives of territorial cohesion and to strive to bring Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives into daily actions.

To this purpose, focus will be put on helping Projects to help the Programme. Projects will be given space and time to display their results at events, in publications and on the Programme website, and will be encouraged to develop a communications focus in their project activities. They should seek to increase their visibility and not concentrate exclusively on the day to day management of their project, also remembering to promote it regionally and nationally. Based on experience and the requirements of Article 8 of the 1828/2006 Regulation, beneficiaries will be provided with commemorative plaques which explain the support provided by the fund as per Article 9 of the 1828/2006 Regulation. They will also be expected to be prominently displayed. A list of project beneficiaries, names and short summaries of each project and the amount that they receive will be posted on the programme website and sorted by Priority. This will be updated on a regular basis.

With communication activity taking place both on a programme wide and on a project specific basis the key points for promoting the Programme will be easy to identify and to get through to decision makers.

Two major elements that will support this are as follows:

- Programme Website (www.irelandwales.ie)

The Programme website was developed internally by the JTS and colleagues from the Managing Authority. It was based on detailed research of all existing programme websites and designed with the aim of being transparent and easy to use with the simplest language possible being employed.

It provides detailed information on all aspects of the programme and will be regularly updated during its lifetime.

It will also be linked to all relevant structural fund websites such as the Welsh European Funding Office website, www.wefo.wales.gov.uk. who have also linked their site to that of the programme.

- Events and Seminars

Another effective way of promoting the programme is the holding of public events and seminars. During the development of the programme four public meetings were held in the programme area. Following the adoption of the Operational Programme a formal ministerial launch of the programme was held in Llandudno in Wales on December 7th 2007 which was attended by a large number of key stakeholders and potential sponsors. A major Irish launch of all Territorial Cooperation Programmes also took place in Dublin on October 23rd 2007 where the Ireland Wales Programme featured prominently. The Welsh Assembly Government will be holding a similar event in Spring 2008.

One major communications focused event will be held each year while smaller scale events will also be organised when required. One particular example of this is the open information week that was held in advance of the closure of the first call for proposals. The Development Officer team spent two days in Wales and two in Ireland having individual meetings with project applicants who are in the process of finalising their applications. This has a two fold advantage of facilitating project applicants in terms of fine tuning their application and should also assist the JTS in ensuring that the projects that are submitted are of the highest quality possible.

The outcomes of such events will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the strategy will be adjusted as appropriate.

The Managing Authority will also fly the EU flag outside their office for one week every year starting on the 9th of May.

4 INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

There is an indicative annual budget of €30,000 per annum for communication activities from 2007 to 2015. These activities are proposed as a basic list of actions which may need to be added to or taken away from, based on the findings and discussions of Programme Management. This budget implies that most of these activities are managed from the Joint Technical Secretariat. If they are subcontracted to communication agencies costs may need to be adjusted to take account of this.

	Number	Objective	Message	Audience	Timeframe	Budget
Programme Website	1	To provide clear and useful information on how to access funds and how to manage a successful project; To provide a collaborative platform which centralises coherent information on the Programme	It is easy to find information about this Programme; this website is clear and easy to use, with the information you need no more than three clicks away.	All	Aug 2007 to Nov 2007	1. In house staff costs (SEREG) 2. Software costs 3. Hardware costs 4. Domain name purchase costs 5. Hosting Costs
Programme Logo	1	Visual identity; To provide a clear and instant visual recognition of Programme communication tools and documents; to increase visibility	Dynamic, efficient, European, cross border, useful, modern	All	Aug 2007 to Nov 2007	1. In house staff costs (WEFO & SEREG) 2. Graphic design costs (€0)
Plaques	Depends on	Visual identity: To clearly	Positive contribution of	Beneficiaries and the	Life of the programme	Production costs with

	number of projects	demonstrate the contribution of the ERDF to the activity being funded.	EU funds to the programme area and the real difference it makes to communities	general public		supplier.
Publications						
Newsletters	12	To keep in touch with Projects on a regular basis; to inform audiences on Programme developments and short-term activities	A lot going on in the Programme; projects are doing great things	Beneficiaries; internal audiences.	Two per year if printed. More often if digital version.	1. In house staff costs (SEREG & WEFO) 2. Printing costs 3. Graphic design costs
Project Book	1	To display project results and achievements	Funds have been well spent, results are clear and transparent	Beneficiaries, EU decision makers, national and regional decision makers, potential beneficiaries for next Programme.	Once, towards the mid to end of the Programme	1. In house staff costs 2. Graphic design costs 3. printing costs 4. distribution costs
Evaluations and Studies	1	To inform on procedures, proceedings and results	Programme is transparent	Institutions (Internal - MA, CA, EU, MS) (External – Project Partners)	Throughout the Programme	1. in house staff costs 2. Printing costs
Publicity Events	14	To provide opportunities to meet and form new partnerships, to show results of the programme	Show achievements of the Ireland Wales Programme, show that assistance is available	Beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, politicians and key decision makers	Two per year	1. In house staff costs 2. Venue costs 3. Marketing costs 4. T & S costs

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of information and publicity measures;

5.1 PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE (PMC)

The Programme Monitoring Committee will be informed of the content of the Programme's Communication Plan and will be informed and kept up to date in relation to the progress of the Communications plan at regular intervals.

5.2 MANAGING AUTHORITY (MA)

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for promoting and representing the Programme within and outside the Ireland Wales area. It will ensure that the approved Communication Plan is implemented using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the various appropriate cross border levels. The MA can delegate all or part of these responsibilities to the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).

The Managing Authority will be assisted by the Welsh Assembly Government in developing and implementing their information and publicity strategy for the Operational Programme.

The Managing Authority will, in accordance with the communication plan, ensure that the Operational Programme is disseminated widely, including details of the financial contributions from the Funds concerned, and that it is made available to all interested parties. It will also ensure that information regarding funding opportunities offered by joint assistance from the Community and the Member States through this Operational Programme are disseminated as widely as possible.

The Managing Authority will involve in information and communication measures, bodies such as national, regional and local authorities and development agencies; trade and professional associations; economic and social partners; non-governmental organisations; organisations representing business; information centres on Europe and Commission representations in the Member States; and educational institutions, that can widely disseminate information on the Operational Programme.

The Managing Authority will ensure that the information and communication measures are implemented in accordance with the communication plan aiming at the broadest possible media coverage using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the appropriate territorial level. The Managing Authority will designate a contact person to be responsible for information and communication and inform the Commission accordingly.

The Managing Authority will be responsible for information and publicity on the Operational Programme. Information activities will be aimed at the general public and potential beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of Community funding and ensuring transparency.

5.3 JOINT TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT (JTS)

The Joint Technical Secretariat is responsible for both setting up and developing the overall Communication Plan and preparing and implementing the various lines of action that meet the plan's objectives, within budgetary limitations. It will be in charge of the day to day implementation of the strategy.

JTS Contacts:

Antoinette Jordan, Development Officer, JTS - +353 51 318 100

ajordan@seregassembly.ie

Simon Baily, Head of Unit, JTS - +353 51 318 100 sbaily@seregassembly.ie

5.4 DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

In order to develop the broad and coherent promotion of the Programme, each Development Officer will include a section on communication in their work plan. This will show which means or lines of action they intend to use to promote the Programme to various concerned national target groups. Their role in communication is an extension of that of the JTS, as they follow and contribute to implementing the Programme's Communication Plan within the respective member states.

5.5 LEAD PARTNERS

Publicising the support received from the Ireland Wales Programme is a basic requirement which must be fulfilled by all beneficiaries. In order to develop a coherent approach, Lead Partners must establish a joint communication plan with their regional partners. The Lead Partner is in charge of co-ordinating the Communication Plan and ensuring that the project has been sufficiently promoted towards various decision makers, local media and the general public. The Development Officer team and the JTS will be on hand to provide guidance in this regard. As the final beneficiary of ERDF funds, the Lead Partner is responsible for informing the public of the assistance received and the positive results of this. All forms of communication produced by the project or by any of the partners on behalf of the project must include the European flag and clear reference to the financing provided by the Ireland Wales Programme. Communications guidelines will be published in due course.

6 EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES

The Annual Report on Implementation of the Operational Programme shall include examples of how the Communication Plan has been implemented, the arrangements for future communication and publicity actions and where applicable, the website address where this information can be located. The report will also outline any major amendments to the communication plan. An evaluation of the communications measures will be carried out in 2010 and then in the final implementation report as foreseen in Article 4 of the Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006 (Implementation Regulation).

- Programme communication indicators

	Baseline	Final Target
Establishment of Programme Website	0	1
Major Launch Event	0	1
Number of Publicity Events	0	14
Number of Press Releases Issued	0	14
Number of Newsletters produced	0	12
Press Clippings	0	To be determined
Website Statistics	0	To be determined

Evaluation questionnaires will be used when relevant (events, training, seminars, website)